

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings, or versions, of claims.

1-12. (Cancelled).

13. (Previously Presented) A solution advisor tool for designing an information technology (IT) solution, comprising:

a knowledge management system for generating and storing information in a hierarchical format, wherein the knowledge management system includes:

a first knowledge base of characteristics;

a second knowledge base that manages relationship information regarding the interactions of characteristics and defines all valid characteristic combinations, wherein each valid characteristic combination forms a network unit;

a third knowledge base that manages information regarding the interconnectability of network units, wherein a valid combination of network units comprises a configuration; and

a fourth knowledge base that manages information regarding sets of all possible configurations that can fulfill a predetermined function, wherein each set comprises a cloud; and

a design interface system for generating the IT solution, comprising:

a system for specifying the solution using a first cloud;

a system for replacing the first cloud with a set of second clouds;

a system for replacing a selected cloud with at least one configuration;

a system for replacing a selected configuration with at least one network unit; and

a system for replacing a generic network unit with a specific network unit.

14. (Original) The solution advisor tool of claim 13, further comprising a fifth database of keywords.

15. (Original) The solution advisor tool of claim 13, further comprising a sixth knowledge base of valid network unit partners.

16. (Original) The solution advisor tool of claim 13, wherein the characteristics comprise products and functions.

17. (Original) The solution advisor tool of claim 13, characteristics comprise generic products and specific products.

18. (Original) The solution advisor tool of claim 17, wherein the design interface further includes a system for replacing generic products with specific products.

19. (Previously Presented) A program product stored on a recordable medium, which when executed provides a system for generating an information technology solution, comprising:

a system for specifying a generic solution using a cloud selected from a plurality of clouds, wherein each cloud provides a set of all possible configurations that can fulfill a predetermined function that the cloud represents, and wherein each configuration includes a valid set of network units, and wherein each network unit comprises a set of characteristics;

a system for replacing the cloud with at least one second cloud, wherein the at least one second cloud includes a more specific set of configuration details;

a system for replacing a selected cloud with at least one configuration;

a system for replacing a selected configuration with at least one network unit; and

a system for replacing a generic network unit with a specific network unit.

20. (Original) The program product of claim 19, further comprising a system for replacing generic characteristics with specific characteristics. 21. (Original) The program product of claim 19, wherein the set of characteristics include products and functions.

22. (Original) The program product of claim 19, wherein the program product further includes a system for storing and managing information regarding the clouds, configurations, network units and characteristics.

23-29. (Cancelled).